

Ranking Category–WATER QUANTITY

Primary Resource Concerns

- Insufficient Water–Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water
- Insufficient Water–Inefficient Moisture Management

Eligible Land Uses

- Crop, Pasture

Priority

- Applications located in a state designated Quick Response Area (QRA) and converting to non-irrigated land on ALL application acres shall be designated **HIGH PRIORITY**.
- Applications meeting or exceeding the minimum use guideline of 66 percent with application acres having been irrigated at an average rate of at least eight-acre inches/acre/year for the 5 year average benchmark irrigated acres shall be designated **MEDIUM PRIORITY**.
NOTE: Minimum use is calculated by the 5 year average benchmark irrigated acres divided by water right authorized acres.
- All other applications shall be designated **LOW PRIORITY**.

Additional Requirements for this Category

- Producer reports to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) or water districts will be used to determine the benchmark condition of water use in the agricultural operation. Producers will furnish reports from the previous five years to determine the average benchmark condition, and each year during the contract to ensure a reduction in the ground and surface water use in the agricultural operation.
 - o If there are HARDSHIPS that result in discrepancies in the previous 5 years of irrigation used to determine the benchmark condition of water use, another year can be substituted. Hardship example: The producer stops irrigating due to hail damaged crops. Refer to 512.57 on documenting hardships.
- If converted to non-irrigated land, producer must ensure proper wellhead protection to ensure groundwater protection.
- If converted to non-irrigated land, producer will verify that water savings (water rights) will not be used elsewhere for agricultural use or any other purpose. All acres under the water right/well will be taken out of irrigation for the contract period.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, producer must currently have or will install a functioning state–approved water measuring device to state installation specifications (Kansas Administrative Regulations [K.A.R.] 5-1-6) before financial assistance is received.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, well capacity must be able to meet the seasonal Net Irrigation Requirement (NIR), with 50 percent chance rainfall, for the crop grown.

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- If the land continues to be irrigated, the producer will stay within the certified rate, amount, and location of the existing water right at the time the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract is obligated.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, no end gun or similar appurtenances will be present or used on the pivot system for the lifespan of the system.
- If the land continues to be irrigated, Conservation Practice 449, Irrigation Water Management, is required in the conservation plan and will receive financial assistance if not already established, per program policy.

State Issues

1. Answer the following question if the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). The agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the state priority category.
 - (a) Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If the answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other state level questions. If the answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (400 points)
2. If applicable, answer ONE of the following six questions describing your plan to obtain a net water savings in your agricultural operation. If none apply, leave the answers “NO”:
 - (a) Producer will install a three–year crop rotation that will reduce their bench mark use by at least 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. (275 points)
 - (b) Producer will install a three–year crop rotation that will reduce their bench mark use by greater than or equal to 35 percent, but less than 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. (215 points)
 - (c) The entire unit of concern (100 percent) will be converted from irrigated to non–irrigated (STARTING with the first FULL cropping season of the contract) on the entire water right. Producer will install proper wellhead protection and will verify that water rights will not be used elsewhere. (165 points)
 - (d) The Farm Irrigation Rating Index (FIRI) will be increased by at least 20 points. (115 points)
 - (e) The Farm Irrigation Rating Index (FIRI) will be increased by 10 to 19.9 points. (90 points)

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- (f) The Farm Irrigation Rating Index (FIRI) will be increased by 5 to 9.9 points. (65 points)

3. Answer ONE of the following questions related to enrollment into a water conservation agreement:

- (a) The water right associated with the entire unit of concern (100 percent) will be enrolled into a Water Right Conservation Program (WRCP) with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources. (30 points)

Note: Applicant must sign WRCP agreement after application is approved into an EQIP contract, and provide documentation of the approved agreement to NRCS prior to receiving any EQIP payment.

- (b) For conversion to non-irrigated, the water right with the associated entire unit of concern (100 percent) will be voluntarily dismissed through an agreement with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources. (50 points)

Note: Applicant must enter into a WRCP agreement or request a voluntary Water Right dismissal after application is approved for an EQIP contract, and provide documentation of the approved agreement to NRCS prior to receiving any EQIP payment.

4. If applicable, answer ONE of the following four questions related to Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Areas (if the application has multiple wells, points will only be taken for the highest priority well). If none apply, leave the answers “NO”:

- (a) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 1. (15 points)
- (b) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 2. (10 points)
- (c) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 3. (5 points)
- (d) The point of diversion (well/water source) is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area, Priority 4. (3 points)

5. If applicable, answer ONE of the following two questions related to Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) identified sensitive groundwater areas. If neither applies, leave the answers “NO”:

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- (a) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a KGS identified sensitive groundwater area. (5 points)
 - (b) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a KGS identified sensitive groundwater area. (3 points)
- 6. If applicable, answer ONE of the following two questions related to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). If none apply, leave the answers “NO”:
 - (a) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) identified high priority TMDL watershed for dissolved oxygen. (5 points)
 - (b) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a KDHE identified high priority TMDL watershed for dissolved oxygen. (3 points)
- 7. If applicable, answer ONE of the following two questions related to Kansas Source Water Assessment Areas. If neither applies, leave the answers “NO”:
 - (a) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a Kansas Source Water Assessment Area. (5 points)
 - (b) Any part of the unit of concern, but less than 50 percent, is located within a Kansas Source Water Assessment Area. (3 points)
- 8. Answer the following questions related to Intensive Groundwater Use Conservation Areas (IGUCAs), Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAs), and Water Conservation Areas (WCAs):
 - (a) Any part of the unit of concern is located in an IGUCA or a proposed IGUCA. (5 points)
 - (b) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the unit of concern is located within a LEMA or WCA. (5 points)
- 9. Answer ONE of the following three questions related to application water usage: (Water Usage= 5 year Average Acres Irrigated [divided by] Authorized Acres). Note: If none of the following options apply, leave answers “No”.
 - (a) Application water usage, by water right, is at least 90 percent. (10 points)
 - (b) Application water usage, by water right, is between 80 and 89.9 percent. (5 points)

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- (c) Application water usage, by water right, is between 70 and 79.9 percent. (2 points)

10. If applicable, answer ALL of the following questions related to Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism (KDWPT) Ecological Focus Areas. If none apply leave the answers “NO”:

- (a) Any part of the unit of concern is located within a Terrestrial Species Ecological Focus Area and treatment of the resource concern will have a direct habitat benefit to a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in the Ecological Focus Area. (10 points)
- (b) Any part of the unit of concern is located within an Aquatic Species Ecological Focus Area and treatment of the resource concern will have a direct habitat benefit to a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in the Ecological Focus Area. (15 points)

Local Issues

Answer the following questions related to the application:

1. Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If the answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other local level questions. If the answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (250 points)
2. Application includes at least one practice with a lifespan of 10 years or greater, as documented in the FOTG. (75 points)
3. Practices are scheduled to be completed within four years. (75 points)
4. Participant requested a conservation plan for this application prior to August 31, 2016. (50 points)
5. Application was deferred from a previous funding period in the Program Contracts System (ProTracts). (50 points)